



December 21, 2023

All 5 CFHLA Endorsed Candidates are Victorious in the 2023 Elections

On behalf of the Central Florida Hotel & Lodging Association's PAC and PC, we'd like to congratulate **ALL 5 OF OUR ENDORSED CANDIDATES** who were recently victorious in the City of Orlando races, as well as the primary election winner of the open Florida House of Representatives, District 35.

Throughout the 2023 general election, our CFHLA PAC and PC was thrilled to have had another **100% success rate** (same as the 2022 General Election) in turning out the Central Florida hospitality industry.

This includes City of **Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer; Tony Ortiz, City Commissioner, District 2** (unopposed); **Patty Sheehan, City Commissioner, District 4; Bakari F. Burns, City Commissioner, District 6;** and **Erika Booth (R), Florida House of Representatives, District 35.**



Currently a member of the Osceola County School Board, Ms. Booth has now advanced to the General Election that will be held on Tuesday, January 16, 2024. **CFHLA has chosen to continue our endorsement and support of Erika in the General Election.**

THANK YOU to each of you for showing up **BIG** to the polls in support of these bipartisan candidates, and we look forward to working with each of these pro-hospitality champions, as we ensure that our region remains the best place to work, play, live and visit.



The Central Florida Hotel and Lodging Association's (CFHLA) PAC and PC endorsed candidates for the 2023 Elections.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 5 CFHLA PAC/PC ENDORSED CANDIDATES WHO WERE VICTORIOUS IN THEIR ELECTIONS!

Mayor, City of Orlando



Buddy Dyer
Mayor, City of Orlando

Orlando City Commission



Tony Ortiz
City Commissioner, District 2



Patty Sheehan
City Commissioner, District 4



Bakari F. Burns
City Commissioner, District 6

Florida House of Representatives



Erika Booth
Florida House, District 35

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CFHLA Advocacy Wins in 2023

As we wrap up the year, CFHLA is reflecting on the 2023 advocacy victories it has achieved over the past 12 months:

- Collaborated with tourism and hospitality organizations from across the state to secure VISIT FLORIDA funding in the amount of **\$80 million, with \$30 million recurring. This is a \$30 million increase over the current year and the largest appropriation that VISIT FLORIDA has ever received.**
- Led industry efforts to oppose a Florida House legislative proposal that would have **replaced VISIT FLORIDA funding from the state budget with County-level TDT revenues.** Additionally, it would have **changed how tourism marketing dollars are allocated throughout the state.**

CFHLA **strongly opposed this effort and the proposal died** at the conclusion of the 2023 Florida Legislative Session.

- Collaborated with International Drive Resort Area Chamber of Commerce to advocate and secure the recent **approval of Project 5A, the completion of the Orange County Convention Center.**
- Collaborated with partners from across the state to secure the **full funding of the Sadowski Fund** during the 2023 Florida Legislative Session, as the Central Florida community has a dire need for more reliable and affordable rental housing. Additionally, CFHLA was proud to advocate for the **signing of SB 102**. This bill **fully funded the Sadowski Fund and the State Apartment Incentive Loan dollars (SAIL), increased the percentage of State Housing Incentive Partnership dollars (SHIP)** that can be used for rental housing, **removed barriers** to the development of workforce housing, and **provided innovative incentives** and tax credits for businesses to develop high-quality housing for their workforce.
- Led industry efforts and advocated to **create a partial privilege fee waiver, among other revisions to the GTR&R, which will help provide relief to our airports area hotelier shuttles.**

What's next: CFHLA will continue to advocate on behalf of the tourism and hospitality industry at the state and local levels in 2024.

2024 CFHLA Legislative Priorities

As we prepare for the new year, our CFHLA Board of Directors recently approved the following **2024 CFHLA Legislative Priorities**. Our priorities outlined below, will be the focus for the 2024 Legislative Session in Tallahassee and we will promote our agenda by working with members of the Legislature on several key issues that are important to the Central Florida hospitality and tourism industry.

The 2024 Florida Legislative Session officially begins on **January 9, 2024**.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more information.



Tourist Development Tax (TDT)

CFHLA strongly advocates for **preserving the integrity of this "bed tax" and opposes any efforts to expand the allowable uses beyond tourism promotion** including public facility projects such as transportation, workforce housing, sewage, etc.

VISIT FLORIDA Funding

CFHLA supports \$100 million in continued funding for VISIT FLORIDA.

Vacation Home Rentals and Advertising Platforms

While vacations home rentals have long been available in Florida, the option to list available units online through advertising platforms has caused this lodging sector to explode by more than 50,000 units in Central Florida. Florida's statutes **need to be updated to accommodate the changing lodging industry, creating balanced and rational health and safety regulations that protect our visitors, residents, and communities.**

Workforce Housing

CFHLA supports full funding for the Sadowski Fund, as the Central Florida community has a dire need for more reliable and affordable rental housing. CFHLA also encourages the Legislature to consider creating additional

incentives (and clarifications to the Live Local Act) that encourages continued innovative approaches to affordable housing development.

Stormwater Issues

The protection of our environment directly benefits our local community. However, the rules and regulations designed to protect our environmental resources must be done with consistency. **CFHLA supports statewide regulatory rulemaking which recognizes and provides regulatory relief for businesses that plan, design, engineer, construct and operate existing stormwater management systems.**

Florida Timeshare Act

CFHLA supports several of ARDA's legislative proposals, which revise several provisions in the Florida Timeshare Act.

Immigration Reform

CFHLA encourages solutions to our current immigration reform policies, that help our hospitality businesses and economy thrive, instead of hindering it.

Interchange Fees on Sales Tax

The cost of labor, goods, and equipment continues to rise, while margins continue to remain tight. Florida merchants pay over \$288 million annually in interchange fees on the sales taxes and bed taxes they are required to collect. **CFHLA supports prohibiting the collection of interchange on sales tax** will provide relief to businesses, which will in turn provide relief to consumers.

OTHER ISSUES CFHLA IS MONITORING

- Tax Packages
- Regulation of Cashless Businesses
- Revisions to Florida's Child Labor Laws
- Transportation & Infrastructure

November and December Governmental Affairs Committee Meetings



On **Wednesday, November 8**, the CFHLA Governmental Affairs Committee held its meeting at the **DoubleTree By Hilton at the Entrance to Universal Orlando (Thank you, again Jason Lopez)** featuring **Orlando City Commissioner, Bakari Burns, District 6**.

Then on **Wednesday, December 6**, the CFHLA Governmental Affairs Committee closed out the year with its final meeting at the **Hilton Orlando (Thank you, again Chris Mueller)** featuring **Osceola County Commissioner Brandon Arrington, District 3**.

Thank you to all of our members and partners for your amazing dedication and commitment to the betterment of the tourism and hospitality industry! We also appreciate **Jon McGavin**, for his leadership as Chair this year and congratulations to **Jason Lopez** who will lead this crucial committee in 2024!



Regional Tourist Development Tax Update

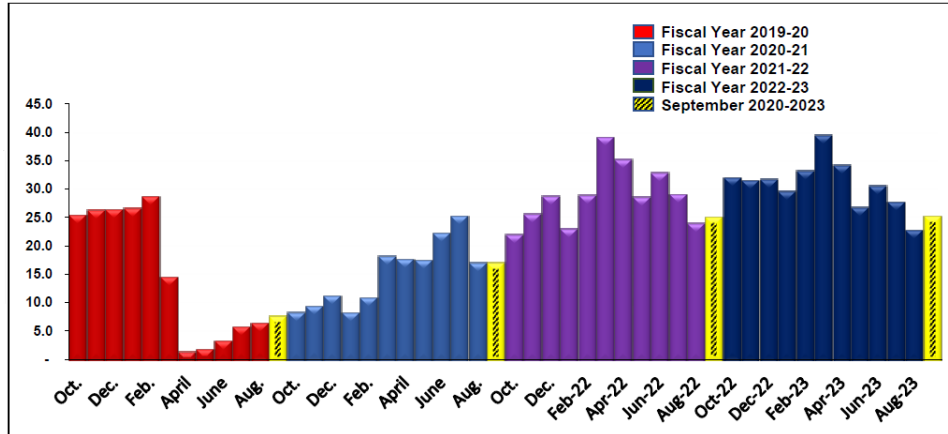
Orange County

The Tourist Development Tax (TDT) collections received by Orange County for the month of **October 2023 were \$29,400,100**. That is a **6.4% decrease**

compared to October 2022.

Compared to last month, **October collections were higher than September collections by \$4.8 million.** In addition, **October Collections were higher than October 2021 collections by \$8 million.**

The chart below shows monthly TDT collections for the current fiscal year and the previous three fiscal years.



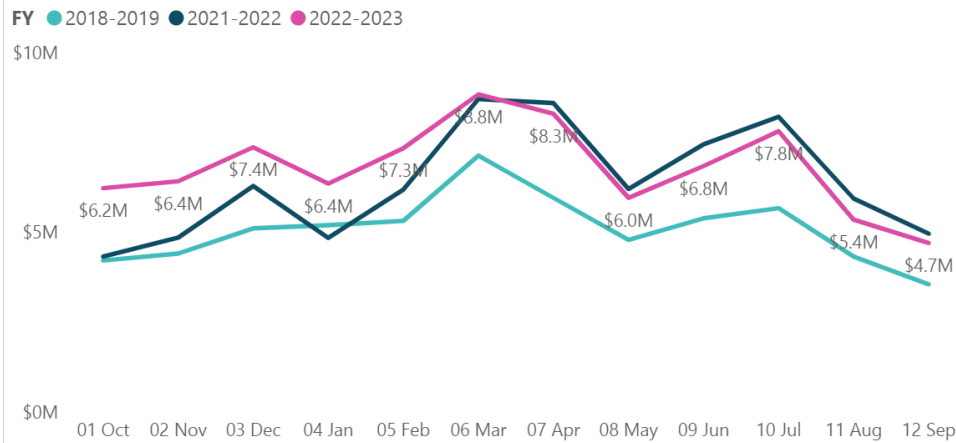
Osceola County

Osceola County collected **\$4.7M in TDT for the month of September,** representing a **5% decline from 2022.**

However, **this was the second-best September TDT collection in Osceola County history.**

For the fiscal year TDT collections stand at \$81.6M, the highest annual total on record for Osceola County and more than double the pre-privatization totals for FY 13-14.

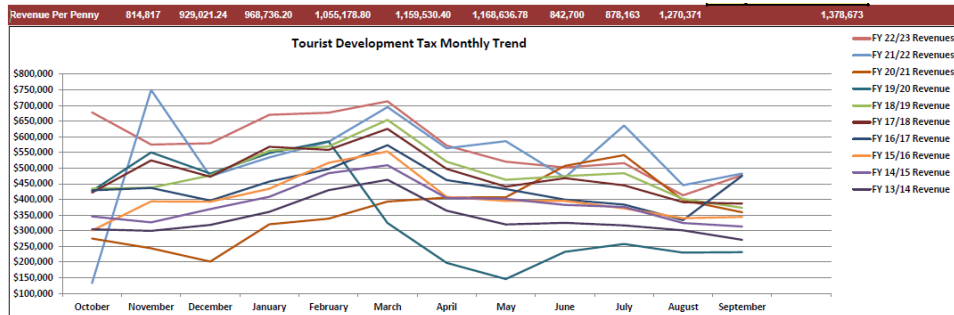
TDT Osceola County



Seminole County

Seminole County announced that the **Tourist Development Tax (TDT) collection for the month of September was at \$477,380.**

For the FY 2022-2023, **Seminole County has now collected \$6.89 Million in TDT, which is a new county record.**



DONATE

CFHLA MEMBERS - Please **consider making a donation of \$50** via the link below to the CFHLA PAC/PC. All contributions help CFHLA expand its efforts to support and endorse Hospitality-Friendly candidates for local and state offices. **In the 2022 General election, all 16 CFHLA endorsed candidates were successfully elected into office. We followed this up in 2023, with all 5 CFHLA's endorsed candidates that were successfully elected into office.**

[**DONATE NOW**](#)

As a reminder, all CFHLA Board Members, PAC/PC Board Members, and ARC Board Members have committed to contributing \$200 to the CFHLA PAC/PC in 2024. If you are a part of one or more of these groups, please consider fulfilling your commitment today.

IN THE NEWS

[Orange County to seek reduction in TDT funds for Visit Orlando for other projects](#) - Orlando Business Journal

[Orange County Commissioners to examine Visit Orlando's \\$100-million budget](#) - Orlando Sentinel

[When Orange County will consider Camping World Stadium, Amway Center, Dr. Phillips Center for TDT](#) - Orlando Business Journal

[Visit Florida could get funding boost in next fiscal year](#) - Tampa Bay Business Journal

[SeaWorld Orlando files application to build new 500-room hotel](#) - clickorlando.com

[City of Kissimmee to convert hotel into affordable housing in Osceola County](#) - Spectrum News

[International tourism in Orange County is expected to return to pre-pandemic levels by the end of 2024](#) - clickorlando.com

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About CFHLA

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The mission of the Central Florida Hotel and Lodging Association is to represent the Central Florida Hospitality Industry, by setting the standard of excellence through advocacy, collaboration, education, recognition, and service.